

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 474

Relating to a question of the privileges of the House.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 8, 2003

Ms. PELOSI submitted the following resolution; which was laid on the table

RESOLUTION

Relating to a question of the privileges of the House.

Whereas on November 22, the Republican leadership held open the vote on rollcall No. 669 on H.R. 1, the Prescription Drug Conference Report, for nearly three hours, the longest period of time in the history of electronic voting in the U.S. House of Representatives;

Whereas the normal period of time for a recorded vote is 15 minutes, and the Speaker of the House reiterated that policy on January 7, 2003, saying “The Chair wishes to enunciate a clear policy with respect to the conduct of electronic votes * * *. The Chair announced, and then strictly enforced, a policy of closing electronic votes as soon as possible after the guaranteed period of 15 minutes”, and in addition the Speaker pro tempore on November 22 announced prior to the vote on Prescription Drugs that it would be a 15-minute vote;

Whereas the amount of time for the vote on H.R. 1 went far beyond any time considered reasonable under established House practices and customs, and was a deliberate attempt to undermine the will of the House;

Whereas the opponents of H.R. 1, both Republicans and Democrats, were on the prevailing side for more than two and one-half hours and proponents never once held the lead during this period of time, and the sole purpose of holding this vote open was to reverse the position that a majority of the House of Representatives had already taken;

Whereas, according to press reports, a Member of Congress who is retiring was told on the House floor during this extended vote that “business interests would give his son (who seeks to replace him) \$100,000 in return for his father’s vote. When he still declined, fellow Republican House Members told him they would make sure Brad Smith never came to Congress”, and such an act is in violation of section 201 of title 18 of the United States Code, which prohibits bribery of public officials; and

Whereas these actions impugn the dignity and integrity of House proceedings, bring dishonor on Members of Congress, and were a gross violation of the rights of Members who opposed this legislation: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House denounces this action in the
 2 strongest terms possible, rejects the practice of holding
 3 votes open beyond a reasonable time for the sole purpose
 4 of circumventing the will of the House, and directs the

- 1 Speaker to take such steps as necessary to prevent any
- 2 further abuse.

